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ABSTRACT

The Academy of Human Resource Development (AHRD) Standards on Ethics and Integrity, which were first presented in 1999, constituted one of three new initiatives to take the AHRD to a new level of leadership in the HRD profession. Although the initial standards were intentionally brief and easy to read, their application in specific situations may be difficult. Because no comprehensive guide to understanding and applying the standards exists for teaching purposes or for use by individual HRD professionals, the standards' authors are currently compiling an agenda to publish documents supporting the standards. The first such document will be a casebook designed to ensure that the standards are understood and used by the HRD community of scholars and practitioners. The casebook will present a comprehensive range of contemporary ethical issues in HRD that are integral and unavoidable aspects of AHRD members' professional role. The case study methodology is particularly well-suited to the complex and multidimensional nature of the task of applying standards in specific ethical situations; it offers a method for collaborative discussion and problem defining and solving; and it can be used to prepare novice and preservice HRD students for the realities of the HRD profession. (Contains 11 references.) (MN)

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Innovative Session 4

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1

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Confronting Professional Values and Ethical Issues: An Innovative Session on Development of a Casebook on Ethics and Integrity

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This innovative session addresses the need for a casebook on ethics and integrity to support the newly developed AHRD Standards on Ethics and Integrity. The casebook should present a comprehensive rang of contemporary ethical issues in HRD that are integral aspects of the professional role of HRD scholars and practitioners. The casebook should also provide HRD professionals an awareness of the ethical standards of the profession, and a vehicle to help them examine how ethical standards apply to specific situations. In addition, a forum for participants to achieve a deeper understanding of the AHRD Standards on Ethics and Integrity is needed.

Keywords: AHRD Standards, Codes of Ethics, Casebooks

Purpose of the Session

This innovative session has two main objectives. First, the session is a forum to encourage and continue the collegial discussions and dialogue on professional ethics. This discussion stems primarily from the keynote session at the 1999 Academy of Human Resource Development (AHRD) conference where the *Standards on Ethics and Integrity* were presented to the AHRD membership for the first time. At the same time, the session will focus on a Casebook, which will be the first supporting document developed to enhance the *Standards*. A case study will be presented to participating Academy members along with a format for writing a case study. In addition, participants will model and practice writing a case study in a small group, and most importantly, the session is designed to encourage and motivate participants to submit case studies to be included in the casebook.

The present paper provides some background to the Innovative session. It begins by describing the need for a case study book on ethical issues in HRD. Then it provides a brief history of AHRD-focused discussion and efforts on issues of ethics and integrity. Then the paper provides a theoretical framework for concerns regarding HRD ethics as well as the use of case studies for didactic purposes. The paper concludes with a description of the Innovative Session planned for presentation at the Academy meeting.

Need for Case Study Book

The Academy of Human Resource Development has been discussing the need for ethical guidelines for several years. In February of 1999, Elwood Holton III, AHRD President, communicated with the membership via the AHRD *Forum* that there were three new initiatives that would take AHRD to a new level of leadership in the HRD profession. One of the three initiatives was the development of the AHRD *Standards on Ethics and Integrity*. He suggested that these standards are a key step in "putting a stake in the ground to define what we see as the proper standards for practice and research." He further proposed that the *Standards* "are a key piece of helping AHRD achieve the vision of "leading the HRD profession through research." (Holton, 1999).

Version one of the *Standards on Ethics and Integrity* was shared with the academy members at the 1999 AHRD conference held in Arlington, VA through the conference proceedings. Feedback from the membership was obtained at a conference Keynote session. Although the initial standards were intentionally brief and easy to read,

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their application in specific situations may be difficult; thus many of the implicit and necessary ethical dilemmas are left for the individual HRD practitioner, researcher or teacher to resolve.

Currently, no comprehensive guide to a better understanding and application of the *Standards on Ethics and Integrity* exists either for teaching purposes or for use by the individual HRD professional to use in particular ethical situation. Consequently, the authors of the *Standards* are currently putting together an agenda to publish supporting documents, beginning with a casebook. The casebook serves a critical function in insuring the Standards are understood and used by the HRD community of scholars and practitioners. This first initiative is lead by one of the original committee members and a new committee member.

The purpose of the casebook is to present a comprehensive range of contemporary ethical issues in HRD that are integral and unavoidable aspects of the professional role of Academy members. Regardless of one's work setting, practice, research or teaching, ethical dilemmas do arise and action decisions must be made as a result. By providing an awareness of the ethical standards of the profession, and by examining how they apply to specific situations, the authors hope to achieve a useful and practical guide.

The authors operate under the assumption that the book cannot provide solutions to every conceivable ethical problem that might arise in practice, research, or teaching. In fact, some situations may be so complicated that no standards can point the way to a "correct" resolution. In some situations one ethical principle may seem to be pitted against another, or upholding an ethical principle may be at variance with a legal requirement. Moreover, the discipline of HRD is constantly emerging and changing, which causes profound ethical dilemmas that neither the ethics standards nor the profession is fully equipped to handle. We assume, however, that the more information and sensitization to issues made available to HRD professionals, the better they will be able to sort out even the most complex ethical problems and make the best possible professional judgments. We also assume that it is important to have the consensus of the profession in reflecting prescriptive, normative values. Therefore, we believe this Innovative Session will make a substantive contribution to HRD knowledge.

History of AHRD Work on Ethics and Integrity

In a Town Forum at the 1996 Academy of Human Resource Development (AHRD), Victoria Marsick (1996) and Ron Jacobs (1996) discussed whether the Academy should have a code of integrity. Marsick (1997) later published some of her remarks in the Human Resource Development Quarterly. At the next annual meeting of the Academy in 1997, a lunch-time Food-for-Thought session discussed some of the ethical dilemmas facing both researchers and practitioners. A group from that gathering developed a session at the 1998 AHRD meeting to identify some of the issues in the areas of research, practice, and teaching. During this same time period, the Academy sponsored pre-sessions focused on ethics and integrity. From these various sessions and discussions, the AHRD Board along with more and more members became convinced that the Academy should develop a code on ethics and integrity, particularly given the mission of "leading the Human Resource Development Profession through research."

Beginning in the spring of 1998, a taskforce was formed to develop such a code. The taskforce included Janet Z. Burns (Georgia State University), Peter J. Dean (University of Tennessee and The Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania), Tim Hatcher (University of Louisville), Fred Otte (retired, Georgia State University), and Hallie Preskill (University of New Mexico), with Darlene Russ-Eft (AchieveGlobal, Inc) as committee chair. This group prepared a draft document titled "Academy of Human Resource Development Standards on Ethics and Integrity." This same group then sponsored a Keynote Session at the 1999 Academy conference focused on a discussion and reaction to these Standards. Based on the comments from the AHRD Board and the Keynote Session a final document was prepared and approved by the Board in November 1999. Recognizing that Standards cannot exist with continued refinement and development, the proposed session provides a continuing discussion and dialogue on the issues surrounding a set of standards on ethics and integrity.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical foundations of this innovative session and the Standards as well are based upon a synthesis of popular ethical theories with the need for case studies as a method to educate HRD professionals and illustrate codes of ethics, which may exemplify such theories. The following discussions focus on (a) ethical theories and (b) case study methodology.

Ethical Theories

To build a true profession and promote professionals who espouse ethical behaviors invariably creates ethical dilemmas. Analyzing ethical dilemmas in some systematic and meaningful way is difficult since ways of viewing ethics from a conceptual perspective are multidimensional. While there is no ubiquitous ethic or universally agreed-upon way to analyze ethics, the two generally acknowledged ways to think about ethics which are currently important to many HRD scholars and practitioners are teleological theories and deontological theories (Dean, 1993; Gellerman, Frankel, & Ladenson, 1990). Teleology, from the Greek telos, meaning 'end' or 'goal', is a consequentialist theory. That is, the moral value of an action or practice is a function of its consequences. Consequentialism significantly underlies much of the ethical thought in regard to development of the standards. Examples of teleological or consequentialist theory are utilitarianism and egoism.

Classical utilitarian theory is the view that we should always choose that which will produce the greatest good for the greatest number. Egoism is the view that an action is moral only when it promotes the long-term interest of the individual. Unlike utilitarianism, egoism restricts pursuit of good to the choosing agent.

In opposition to teleological ethical theories are deontological, or nonconsequentialist views of ethics. The Greek term deon means "duty" or "that which is binding" (Callahan, 1988, p. 19). A deontologist believes that the moral rightness of an action takes precedence over and can be judged independently of the consequences of the action. Results then are not as important as the moral nature of the act in question. One's moral philosophy provides a standard of behavior through adherence to moral rules.

Ethical issues in HRD can be viewed through the teleological/ deontological distinction in ethical theory. When we seek to avoid harm to individuals or the wider society or produce positive consequences through higher productivity or by enhancing employee benefits, we are viewing ethics through a teleological lens. When an HRD professional makes an ethical decision for or against an action or practice based on teleology, they view the action or practice as moral or immoral because of its consequences or lack of consequences in the world. Conversely, deontological reasoning holds that an act or practice should be judged as right or wrong because of some feature intrinsic to the act or practice. In other words, what makes an act or practice morally justifiable is the act or practice itself, not its consequences.

The familiar ethical theories discussed herein provided a theoretical foundation for establishing a code of ethics and for educating HRD professionals and further institutionalizing ethical standards through case studies. Unfortunately, there is no ubiquitous ethic or universally agreed-upon way to analyze ethics, thus, only two generally acknowledged ways in which most people think about ethics were discussed herein. Recognition is given to other unique and divergent ethical points of view such as feminism as ethic, Marxism, and environmental ethics to name but a few. These divergent theories, while meaningful, were not discussed due to the need for brevity.

Case Study Methodology

The use of case study and vignette analysis has a rich history in education, surpassed only by the history of case analysis in cultural ethnography and business (Watson, 1997). In fact, the case study method, used in practice and in teaching, appears as early as the late 1800s. Today the case study approach is used in many fields such as medicine, psychology and ethics. Perhaps the most important purpose the case study can serve in the field of ethics for HRD is that it can provide a context to make decisions in complex ethical situations when there is not an exact match between theory and practice.

Whether the methodology is called case study, case analysis, case incident study or vignette analysis, the structure and purposes have more similarities than differences. Some of the purposes of employing the methodology are to develop skills in reflective and critical thinking, define problems to be solved, discuss relevant data and various sides of the issues, and to verify facts to make judgments. Additionally, Redman (1999) points out that cases actively involve individuals in the learning process because in the design of the methodology, a participant's active responsibility takes the place of passive acceptance.

By design, a case study contains a series of incidents pertaining to a certain situation. In contrast, the case incident study, or vignette is generally less complex and built around a single incident or event and the event is only briefly described. In either instance, the case or vignette is an actual situation or a formulated situation that contains the problem to be addressed. The case is written out and usually includes a short history of the situation, information collected about the situation, and information about the current situation as it now exists. Some shorter cases or vignettes are simply a description of the setting and characters and a brief account of the incident or event.

When used for instructional purposes, cases are reviewed by students and followed with a series of questions. Redman (1999) offers a format for designing cases which includes a case title, subject matter or topic, contextual information, and the story. This particular format also includes questions for reflection. The primary issue embedded in the case is well thought out and secondary issues are included. In general the case study methodology offers flexibility as the questions can be facilitated in a large group discussion, small discussion groups or one can work individually on a case.

The rich complexity of the case method is evidenced by its varied uses. One example appears in the work of Keith-Spiegla and Koocher (1985) who use vignettes for teaching ethics in psychology. The vignettes they use illustrate violations of APA's Ethical Principles as well as other ethical dilemmas which have been adapted either from ethics committees' case files or actual incidents known to the authors. In this work, the authors present the vignette, the area of the APA's Ethical Principles that applies to the situation, and an "answer" to the problem. Another example of the methodology appears in Teaching in Today's Classrooms Cases from Middle and Secondary School (Redman, 1999). In this work, the cases are complex and allow for multiple levels of analysis. According to Redman, (1999) the cases represent current problems that are real and grounded in research. Thirty-two cases, based on different themes, are presented and followed by questions for reflection and additional activities to "extend thinking." The author also invites readers to create additional context for the cases.

Advantages of Using the Case Study as a Companion Piece to the Standards on Ethics and Integrity

The case study methodology has several advantages for the field of HRD relative to the Standards on Ethics and Integrity (1999). First, due to the multidisciplinary nature of HRD, ethical situations are probably much more complex and more multidimensional than they have been depicted in existing theoretical work. The case study approach offers a method for collaborative discussion and problem defining and solving. Additionally, because of the practical application approach, case studies help change agents, teachers, and other HRD practitioners and professionals prepare for problems that are commonly found during the change process or in day to day activities of a profession. Finally, cases can be used to prepare novice and pre-service HRD students for the realities of the profession.

Format of the Innovative Session

A panel of people who wrote the Standards on Ethics and Integrity will lead this 90-minutes session. The panel includes the original committee of Darlene Russ-Eft (Committe Chair), Janet Z. Burns, Peter J. Dean, Tim Hatcher, Fred L.Otte and Hallie Preskill. Steve Aragon, University of Illinois, has joined the committee. The session has two main objectives. First, the session will be a forum to encourage and continue the collegial discussion and dialogue on professional ethics stemming from the keynote session at the 1999 AHRD conference where the Standards on Ethics and Integrity were presented to the membership for the first time. At the same time, the session will focus on a Casebook, which will be the first supporting document to the Standards. The panel will present a case study to Academy members, introduce a format for writing a case study, model and practice writing a case study in a small group, and most importantly, encourage and motivate participants to submit case studies to be included in the casebook.

Introduction of the Session

During the first ten-15 minutes, the theoretical foundation of the session will be explained followed by each panel member briefly reviewing the area of the Standards that he/she worked on, and report on progress since last year's conference. During the next ten minutes, the designated authors will explain the plan for the casebook, providing a high level description.

Body of the Session

A panel member or members will spend about 15 minutes presenting a case and show the various components that we envision having in the casebook. Handouts will be provided for participants. At this point the session will become interactive. The panel, based on participant interest, will identify the standards that the participants are most interested in working on. The panel member(s) who wrote that particular section of the Standards will lead a small group to begin to develop a case in that area. This would be a 30 to 40-minute working session. Small groups could generate ideas for case studies, or actually begin to construct a case study.

Wrap-up of Session

The panel members and entire group will come back together and report to the smaller groups' thoughts and processes. Commitment would be sought on submissions for the book, and timetables would be presented by the main author(s).

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